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WELLNESS WEEKLY

Watch Out ... For Fattening Fall Foods

When the temperature starts to drop, many of us turn to rich fall foods -- perfect for football games, hayrides, holiday parties, and, if we aren't careful, weight gain. Listed below are some of fall's most fattening foods you should avoid or improve so you can make it through the season without gaining a pound.

Game-day Foods

Chips, hot dogs, pizza, wings, and beer can ruin any diet. If you're a sports fan, you may be glued to the couch for hours every week. Here are some tips:

- Do push-ups, sit-ups, or jumping jacks during halftime or commercials.
- Watch the game while you pedal on a stationary bike.
- Serve veggies and low-fat dip as part of your spread.

Cream Soups and Hearty Stews

Cream of potato soup and broccoli cheese soup may seem like perfect fall foods, but warm soups and stews that are loaded with cream, cheese, or meat are also loaded with calories. Instead:

- Choose broth-based and vegetable-based soups to fill you up for fewer calories.

Seasonal Beverages

Hot chocolate, pumpkin-spice lattes, eggnog, and apple cider -- are a quick and easy way to take in lots of extra calories. Adding whipped cream or caramel drizzles only makes it worse. Instead:

- Try a hot cup of green or flavored tea, rich with antioxidants and calorie-free.



Caramel Apples

An afternoon snack of apples with a thick layer of caramel and nuts can total more than 500 calories. Tip:

- Have apple slices with a small container of low-fat caramel for dipping. This has a fraction of the fat and calories caramel apples

Mac and cheese

Mac and cheese is a favorite comfort food for both kids and adults. One cup can have 300 to 400 calories, depending on the brand. Add sausage or ham and it's even more fattening. Tips:

- Modify the recipe by using a low-fat cheese and milk.
- Substitute veggies for meat to get more nutrition.

Vegetables with Added Fat

Yams and sweet potatoes are very nutritious, but you quadruple the calories when you mix them with cheese, cream, butter, or bacon. A sweet potato casserole can easily have 500 calories per serving. Tips:

- Cut calories by eating veggies oven-roasted or grilled.
- If you must have mashed potatoes, skip the gravy

All Things in Moderation

It only takes an extra 100 calories per day to gain 10 pounds a year. The best strategy for your health is to avoid weight creep altogether. You can enjoy comfort foods, but you have to do so in moderation.

- Check your portion sizes.
- Limit alcohol.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques and substitutions.
- Stay active and exercise regularly.

